

Advanced Topics in Historical Performance (HiMus 611A-01)

Class Meetings: To be arranged

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This course provides students with the opportunity to investigate a topic of their choice within the field of historical performance practice. It is intended primarily for graduate students in the Historical Performance program who wish to undertake independent research and study leading to a formal presentation, research paper, or another appropriate final project.

Course objectives include:

- identifying a significant question or issue of historical performance that can be successfully explored during the current semester or academic year;
- drawing up an appropriate bibliography and research plan;
- presenting research results verbally and in practical demonstrations;
- incorporating these findings into musical performance.

Course expectations include:

- attendance at weekly meetings (absences should be arranged ahead of time, if possible, and are excused only for illness, emergencies, and professional development);
- reporting at each meeting on the week's reading, study, or writing;
- discussing one another's research reports and otherwise participating in each meeting;
- successful completion of a final project.

Work for the course depends on the nature of each student's topic and final project. The latter might be a formal research paper or a lecture-demonstration. Recent projects include (1) a paper on the use of portamento in French and German violin playing and instruction ca. 1775–1825; (2) a lecture-demonstration on written and improvised diminution (embellishment) in Venetian instrumental music of the late Renaissance and early Baroque; (3) a study of vocal and instrumental phrasing and articulation as taught by the Italian-English pedagogue Corri.

Semester plan. The semester is divided into four segments:

- (1) 1–3 weeks during which students identify topics and draw up reading lists and work plans;
- (2) a period of roughly 5 weeks during which each student carries out reading and study, reporting findings to the group;
- (3) another period of about 5 weeks during which students continue reading and study, while preparing for the final project through the presentation of outlines and drafts for papers, or through partial run-throughs of lecture-demonstrations;
- (4) 1–3 weeks during which each student completes the final project and presents it in some form to the group or in a larger forum.

Evaluation. The final project accounts for 50% of the final grade, attendance and participation in weekly meetings for 25%, and weekly presentations also for 25%. Final projects are expected to incorporate original research or creative work. They should be equivalent in quality and scope to papers and lecture-demonstrations presented publicly at conferences of professional organizations such as the College Music Society and the Historical Keyboard Society of North America.